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SHALL THIS WAR END GERMAN MILITARISM?



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SHALL THIS WAR
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By
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THE FOUR CARDINAL POINTS IN THE POLICY OF THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC CONTROL ARE AS FOLLOWS

1. No Province shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent by plébiscite of the population of such province.

2. No Treaty, Arrangement or Undertaking shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the sanction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.

3. The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the "Balance of Power"; but shall be directed to the establishment of a Concert of Europe and the setting up of an International Council whose deliberations and decisions shall be public.

4. Great Britain shall propose as part of the Peace settlement a plan for the drastic reduction, by consent, of the armaments of all the belligerent Powers, and to facilitate that policy shall attempt to secure the general nationalisation of the manufacture of armaments, and the prohibition of the export of armaments by one country to another.

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Shall This War End German Militarism ?

The immense majority of the British people are in no doubt at all as to the objects which this war is to accomplish. It is being fought in order to free Europe from a great menace; to give her a more stable peace than she has known in the past; to put an end to the nightmare of militarism and the burdens that this has heretofore loaded upon us; to defeat the evil doctrine of Nietzscheanism and brute force and destroy the worship of the war god. An eminent journalist puts the case thus :

As this great tragedy proceeds it becomes increasingly clear that the issue that is being fought at this moment in the trenches of the Aisne is not this or that national gain or loss but the spiritual governance of the world. Someone—I think it was Sir Robertson Nicoll—has expressed it in the phrase, “Corsica or Calvary.” I think that is more true than picturesque phrases ordinarily are, for the cause for which the Allies fight is more vast than any material motive that inspires them. They are the instruments of something greater than themselves.

If the phrase is unjust, it is unjust to Corsica, for behind the militarism of Napoleon there was a certain human and even democratic fervour; but behind the gospel of the Kaiser there is nothing but the death of the free human spirit. . . . If he were to triumph the world would have plunged back into barbarism. . . . We are fighting not against a nation so much as against an evil spirit who has taken possession of that nation, and we must destroy that spirit if Europe is to be habitable to us. . . . But at the moment we have one thing to do—to hang together until we have beaten the common enemy of humanity. When that is done, we shall remember the cause for which we stand. We shall break the Prussian idol for ever. . . . We stand for the spirit of light against the spirit of darkness.*

Such is also the view of the *Times* :

The spokesmen of the nation realise to the full that this, in Mr. Asquith’s words, is a spiritual conflict.

We have not entered on this war for material gain or for military glory. We have gone into it and we will fight it out, to defeat the monstrous code of international morality which a certain school of German professors and German soldiers have adopted to the horror of mankind.†

The *Times* also tells us on another occasion that the Allies go to Berlin in order to say to the German people : “ This worship of war must cease and the sword you have forged must be broken,”

* “ A.G.G.” in *Daily News*, September 26th.
† September 5th.

that we are to invade Germany because "until they see the conquerors in their midst the Germans will not turn from Treitschke and Nietzsche to Luther and Goethe once more."* Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Churchill, among others of our political leaders, authors, and writers representing not merely the Conservative and "moderate" public, but the pacifists, idealists, reformers, Radicals, Progressives, and Socialists, have all testified to like effect. One great popular novelist says: "The defeat of Germany may open the way to disarmament and peace throughout the world. . . . Every sword that is drawn against Germany now is a sword drawn for peace." Mr. Blatchford sees in the war a new ally for Socialism, while his colleague, Mr. Neil Lyons, tells us that it is "the best fight for Socialism that has ever been waged anywhere or anywhen." Professor Gilbert Murray is convinced that this war will mark the liberalisation of Russian institutions, for while the defeat of the autocracy in Germany is to liberate the German people, the victory of the autocracy in Russia is to liberate the Russian people, a view which is also shared by Mr. H. G. Wells and Mr. C. Hagberg Wright, who both write that: "This war has made Russia definitely liberal by linking her almost indissolubly with the western liberal Powers."

Such, then, is for the moment the all-but-universal view: the military defeat of Germany will of itself destroy the old fallacies and sophisms, the old passions and ugly temper produced by the evil doctrines of militarism, the belief in force, the reign of bureaucracy. All this will disappear from Europe and we shall have peace and security for some generations at least, if we do but "beat Germany to her knees." Indeed we have come in our minds to make these evils synonymous with the German State; destroy the German State and you have destroyed these things. It would be broadly true at this time to say that for most of us just now armaments, militarism, and war, international bad faith and rapacity, fear and resentment, all the errors of passion that lead to conflict, are merely, or at least mainly, German things; that they have not in the past in any period that need concern us marked the conduct of our allies, of countries like Russia or France or Servia or Japan or Montenegro, and presumably could not mark their conduct in the future; that all the immense difficulties which have stood heretofore in the way of international co-operation will in large part, at least, disappear so soon as the German State has been destroyed.

How the Nation's Hopes may be Defeated.

Now I want to suggest that such a belief is both unsound and dangerous; that its prevalence may prove disastrous to the very results which our people hope to see this war accomplish;

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that indeed if it is not corrected it may absolutely defeat those results; that while it is true that we must secure at any cost the victory of the Allies, mere military victory will not of itself bring about that better and safer Europe which we hope for and which is the justification of this war; that the attainment of that object will depend not alone upon the defeat of Germany but upon the kind of peace and settlement that follows such defeat and the energy with which we insist upon the right kind of reconstruction after the war, and see that in our own policy and conduct we avoid the fallacies and errors of our enemy; that if we neglect this half of our task, the other half—the war itself, its infinite suffering and sacrifice—will be absolutely barren and will render still more remote the achievement of the splendid aims and aspirations which sanctify it in the minds of our people.

Let us at the risk of some repetition get the position quite clear. It is essential to the best interests of Europe and mankind that the Allies should win, and that Prussian military autocracy should realise its helplessness as against its united neighbours. It is quite certain, moreover, that the British nation is going through with this war, and that it is going to win, at whatever cost. There is not the faintest risk of the nation wavering on that point. But there is a very grave risk that the other essential for achieving what it desires to accomplish by the war should be overlooked. And it is for this reason that it is important to urge this fact: that victory will not of itself render the future peace of Europe secure, will not achieve any of those things in the direction of destroying militarism in Europe which are suggested in the very optimistic expressions of opinion which I have quoted; that unless victory is accompanied by political wisdom on our part, the crushing of Germany may leave us in a worse condition than before the war, expose us all to its renewal at no distant date, fasten the shackles of militarism more firmly than ever upon the long-suffering peoples of Europe.

If that futility is to be avoided, our doggedness in this war must be intelligent instead of unintelligent; we must fight not blindly, but with a clear vision of what we want; we must know what this war is about and how its objects will be achieved, and with firm resolution not to share the errors and faults of our enemies, not be led away from the high aims with which it started into the lower aims of even an excusable vengeance, with a determination not to "lose our tempers and call it patriotism."

What Does "Smashing" Germany Mean?

It is probable that few things have been so fruitful in the creation of political error and false ideas as words or phrases or illustrations which, used in the first instance because they are picturesque or rhetorical but which do not even pretend to be an exact statement of facts, are in the end taken as meaning exactly

what they say or represent. Economists like Professor Cannan have shown us, for instance, how the employment of military terms with reference to international trade, and other economists how the habit of talking of "France" or the "United States" as doing so much trade, as though they were commercial corporations actually carrying on business (oblivious of the fact that France and America as nations or governments do no international trade at all), has given rise to essentially false ideas in economics. In the same way political writers have shown that to talk of nations "owning" a territory has given rise to other false ideas. So in the present juncture we talk picturesquely of "beating Germany to her knees" and "annihilating" her, of "wiping her from the map," of "smashing her." What precisely do these resounding phrases mean? What, for instance, does the "destruction" of Germany mean? "Germany" comprises 65 millions of people. Do you propose to slit all their throats? Have you "destroyed" them because you have beaten their armies? Suppose that the Allies kill in this war a quarter of a million German soldiers (which will be a very large estimate), there will still remain to this population of 65 millions some five millions of fighting men. You cannot "destroy" them; you cannot massacre them, you cannot distribute them as prisoners of war among the Allies to be maintained as a permanent charge, you cannot even expel them from Germany.

Some Suggestions Examined.

It has been suggested quite definitely in several quarters that while, of course, you cannot annihilate Germany in the sense of destroying her population or even the men who have fought in her army, you can break up the German Empire by partitioning it, as Poland was partitioned in the past. It is suggested that France and Belgium are between them to have all Germany up to the Rhine, Schleswig Holstein is to be given back to the Danes, Russia is to have other Baltic provinces and East Prussia, Switzerland is to be enlarged, and so forth.

Even though such a policy has not large support in England it might conceivably be pushed by one or more of our Continental Allies, and it is therefore important to see what it involves. Consider the sort of Europe such a settlement would produce—whether it would be that liberalised one, freed from the doctrine of force, which the authorities I have quoted foretell. First there would, of course, be, as the result of this "partitioning" of Germany *à la Pologne*, not one Government holding down conquered provinces, but four or five. Now a Government that is holding down unwilling provinces cannot be a democratic Government. It will have within its borders two degrees of representative government, two degrees of freedom, two degrees of democracy, for the reason that it will not be able to grant a

hostile, resentful, and conquered people the same freedom to express its wishes through its votes, or even through the medium of the Press, that it grants to its own people, properly speaking. Very many speak of this war as giving the prospect of liberalising Russia, as enabling us to induce Russia to accept some of the Parliamentary principles for which we stand, but if Russia annexes German provinces, it is quite certain that she will not give them freedom to express their views either through representative institutions or the ordinary machinery of a free people—popular meeting and demonstration, a free Press, and so forth. Because naturally a conquered province would at once use this freedom for the purpose of an agitation in favour of separation or autonomy, and this, of course, the conquering Government could not tolerate. Provinces which are in this way conquered by the sword would have to be held by the sword. The very fact of having within her borders a hostile element would compel the victorious conquering country to remain military in its make-up and maintain the machinery of political repression. And in a lesser degree something of the same sort would be taking place in France. If the France of the future were to include, as has been suggested, all the left bank of the Rhine, certain of those provinces, German since the earliest dawn of history, would not readily accept the sway of their hereditary enemies. They, too, would have to be held by the sword, and to do that the victor must retain the sword. France, too, would have to set up the ugly machinery of repression; she could not tolerate separatist agitation in her new conquests. There would be laws against meetings, laws possibly against the use of German speech, and in France there would be two orders of citizens. From being a homogeneous people living under the same law for all, France would become like Russia and like the pathetic empire of Austria which has gone to pieces, an artificial creation, possessing different races, different languages, different laws, one group dominating, another subservient; she also would be maintaining a system based not upon consent, but upon her ability to compel unwilling populations to submit to her rule, so that the net outcome of this war to destroy militarism and Prussianism would be to render liberal France more militarised than ever, to turn France into a kind of Prussia, and to Prussianise still further the great military empire of Russia.

Such, then, would be the outcome of a war entered upon for the liberalisation of Europe, the vindication of the principle of nationality, the ending of the rule of the sword, the destruction of the philosophy of conquest and of the holding down of people by sheer might, for the ending of military castes, of government based on brute force and armaments. Having entered upon this war as a crusade to end these things, we finish it by breaking up a great nationality, by handing over provinces without their consent to alien rulers whom they detest, and—as a necessary and inevitable consequence—create several military autocracies so

as to enable the conquering Allies to hold their conquered provinces in subjugation. We should have in Europe not one Alsace-Lorraine—which, however, has been sufficient of itself to keep alive during nearly half a century resentment and bitterness which have been a large factor, perhaps the dominating one, in creating the present catastrophe—but several. Yet Alsace was, after all, a German-speaking province, bound by a thousand years of history to the German group, its union to France having been itself an act of conquest two centuries since. Yet if annexation to the German Empire even under those conditions was an act of ruthless tyranny and oppression, as we believe it to be, what shall be said of the transfer of German-speaking provinces to a Muscovite Empire, of the transfer of great free cities and ancient republics to the domination of the Russian bureaucracy, the Tsar and the Grand Dukes?

Is this to be the end of the “War of Liberation”? Is our Holy War against the Devil’s Doctrine of Prussianism to end by the Allies actually committing the very crime which they accuse Germany of desiring to commit, by forcing their rule and civilisation upon unwilling neighbours? Are we going to end this war by ourselves becoming converted to the Prussian doctrine?

Possible Influence of Allies.

When they actually tackle the problem I do not suppose that the Western governments would tolerate for a moment the transfer of a genuinely German province to Russian rule. Not only, however, is such an outcome of the war airily discussed in Great Britain itself, but there is a very real danger that we may be dragged by our allies—and our allies include, of course, Russia, Servia, Montenegro, and Japan—into a settlement upon principles in which we, as a free and democratic people, do not believe. That this danger is not chimerical is proved by a sign or two which has already been given, of the sort of settlement which Russia, for instance, desires. The *Novoe Vremya*, a Russian paper which is pretty freely used by the Russian Government as a vehicle of official communications, has already shown very considerable irritation at what it supposes to be Great Britain’s reticence in preparing for the partitioning of the German Empire. The military critic of the *Times*, who will not be accused of undue democratic prejudice, comments on this as follows:

The *Novoe Vremya* took our statesmen to task the other day for aiming only at the capture or the destruction of the German Navy and the humbling of German militarism. We ought, it seems, to aim higher—namely, at the crushing of Germany for good and all. In a great war between Allies the criticism of one friendly Power by another is best suspended, for if we begin telling each other what we ought to do we shall not be so well prepared to pull together. We are all doing our best, fighting our own corners, and none of us wants to be told his business. If the *Novoe Vremya* will look into the matter it will observe that to crush German militarism and to make an end of the system which has

burdened and oppressed Europe for so long will give us all that we can legitimately desire. To crush the Germans as a whole we must either kill them all or occupy their countries permanently, and we do not want to substitute one tyranny for another. Nor, we can be sure, does Russia. We have to draw the teeth of this Prussian monster, to humble a military caste, and to leave Prussia herself at the peace with the constitution which she has so long sought in vain. In these reasonable aims we shall sooner or later have large sections of the German people with us, and our ends can then be more quickly attained. But to kill or everlastingly to police a nation of 60 millions of people is an extravagant proposition, and in war one must aim at what is attainable and not the reverse. This is a military as well as a political question. We must not impose upon strategy an impossible task, for if we do we may be unable to achieve aims which are both practicable and desirable.

One may reply, of course, that the Russians and the French are not like the Germans, that it is not in their nature to show the ruthlessness and the brutality and the stupidity that the Prussians have shown, and that they represent a different moral force to the Germans.

I want to give that point every consideration.

What Made Germany Aggressive?

What has made the Germans a force for evil in Europe? Is it their race, the blood that is in them—like the instinct of the Malay when he runs amok—or is it the results of an evil doctrine and an evil tradition?

No one but a very angry man who had temporarily lost his sense of facts and his memory, or a very silly or ignorant one, could hesitate as to the answer to that question. The Germans are of all the peoples of Europe the most nearly allied to ourselves in race and blood; in all the simple and homely things our very language is the same—and every time that we speak of house and love, father and mother, son and daughter, God and man, work and bread, we attest to common origins in the deepest and realest things that affect us. Our religious history is allied; our political ties have in the past been many. Our Royal Family is of German descent. No, if we say that German wickedness is inherent in the race and not in doctrine we condemn ourselves. If we are to see straight in this matter at all we must in judging Germans remember what they *were* and what they have *become*. That is not easy.

The public memory is notoriously a short-lived one. If twenty years ago the average Briton had been asked what people in Europe were most like himself in moral outlook, in their attitude to the things which really matter, family life, social morality, the relations of the sexes, and the respective importance which we ascribe to the various moral qualities, he would have said almost to a man that that nation was Germany. The notion that we were more naturally allied in our character to the French would have appeared to ninety-nine Britons out of a hundred, twenty years ago, almost offensive. Until yesterday, for nearly

three hundred years among educated men in Europe, German idealism has been recognised as the outstanding moral force in Europe. From the days of the Reformation until military victory changed it all, Germany's great work has been in things of the mind. Two hundred years ago a great Frenchman, Voltaire, embodied this common judgment of educated men in Europe when he said that "France ruled the land, England the sea, and Germany the clouds." And even now in the passion and heat of war there are Britons who cannot be accused of pro-Germanism who recognise this in the fullest degree. One of them has said quite recently :

The world's debt to Germany for thought and knowledge is inestimable. . . . Germany was a land of dreams. Her peoples from the earliest times had been children of romance, and they became, not only pioneers of thought, but the unequalled masters of certain forms of imaginative art. Of that the mere names of their composers and poets—Grimm and Humperdinck, Schubert, and Schumann, Schiller, Heine, Weber, Brahms—are sufficient testimony. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner—no other people has had such genius in the world of blended thought and emotion out of which music springs; and no other people has shown so constantly the power of laborious craftsmanship which musical creation demands. Goethe, who represented in his single work all three of the great movements of German mind—in science, in thought, and in romance—was typical of German capacity, and in his attitude to the world a typical German of his time. . . . The ideal of that Germany was art and culture, not patriotism. Its vital forces were turned to the production not of political efficiency or military leadership, but of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony," and Goethe's "Faust." This was the Germany on which the figure of the genial professor, familiar to caricature, was founded. To it the world owes, and has always paid, a steady tribute of affection and gratitude.*

The Germany that we are fighting is not that Germany. That is what Germany was: what she has become we know too well. This change, long before this war, had caused all students of Germany to wonder. An Englishman who has deeply studied the German nation writes :

No one who knows Germany from its literature, and especially its poetry and its philosophy, and who has followed its career during the past generation, can have failed to recognise the immense change which has come over the national life and thought. The dominant note of German life to-day is not that of fifty, or forty, or even thirty years ago. . . . A new spirit has entered into the national life. If the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed in Germany the reign of spirit, of ideas, the second half witnessed the reign of matter, of things, and it is this latter sovereignty which is supreme to-day. A century ago Germany was poor in substance but rich in ideals; to-day it is rich in substance but the old ideals, or at least the old idealism, has gone.†

There is then some influence at work responsible for a wonderful change—a change that has had disastrous effect for Europe. It is important to know what that influence is, for if it can have

* "The Round Table," September, 1914.

† "The Evolution of Modern Germany," by W. Harbutt Dawson, p. 2.

this effect on Germany it might have the same effect on other countries and create new dangers for us—for Europe—in the future.

What, then, has wrought this wonderful change in a people so closely allied to ourselves, whose race is so similar that their children in the hotels of France and Italy are mistaken for British children? The human raw material is the same, and until half a century ago gave results which won our respect and admiration. What is this change of the last half century which from the same material gives results so different? There can be only one answer. The old Germany was a Germany of small, self-governing States, of small political power; the new Germany is a "great" Germany with a new ideal and spirit which comes of victory and military and political power, of the reshaping of political and social institutions which the retention of conquered territory demands, its militarisation, regimentation, centralisation, and unchallenged authority; the cultivation of the spirit of domination, the desire to justify and to frame a philosophy to buttress it. Someone has spoken of the war which made "Germany great and Germans small."

Creating Prussianism Elsewhere.

But why, when we talk of partitioning Germany among the conquering Allies, should we expect the causes which have worked such havoc with this people to work differently in the case of other European States? Have the races that inhabit them—remoter from our own than the German—some fundamental moral quality not possessed by the Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon stock, which will enable them to resist those evils which flow from the fatal glamour of political greatness and military conquest? Why should we suppose that these causes which have worked so disastrously in the case of older Germany should have any very different effect in the case of a triumphant and conquest-holding Russia and France? And if that happened we should not have destroyed Prussianism and its philosophy: we should merely have transferred it from one capital to another or to others, and to others, indeed, that may be even more menacing by reason of their situation and circumstances even than Berlin. Do we desire when we talk airily of giving France all Germany up to the Rhine to revive the French spirit which marked the France of Louis XIV, which for nearly two hundred years kept us in constant fear and involved a long and bitter struggle, worse even than that which is now being waged against Germany? Do we wish to revive once more that spectre which was laid but yesterday—the possible menace of a Russia, at present rudimentary and but partially civilised but growing vastly in area and in numbers, to our position both in Asia and in Europe? If the most elementary wisdom guides us there will be no "partitioning" of Germany *à la Pologne*.

Other Suggested Settlements.

Suggestions which have a much greater air of feasibility are that after the transfer of Alsace-Lorraine to France, or the creation in these provinces of an autonomous State like Luxemburg, and the retrocession of Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark, the incorporation of German Poland in the reconstituted Polish Kingdom, neutralisation or internationalisation of the Kiel Canal, the transfer of all the German colonies to Britain, the destruction of her fleet, the German Empire would then be so weakened that she could not for many generations at least, especially in view of the dismemberment of her ally, Austria, threaten again the peace of Europe. Or, if that should not suffice, the dethronement of the Kaiser and some possible bargain with the southern German States would resolve the existing German Empire into a "geographical expression," which it was until half a century since.

Now there is much in this programme that is feasible and desirable if it were accompanied by some guarantee of real autonomy in the case of a reconstituted Poland and the whole arrangement supplemented by the formation of a European League or Federation or Council of Nations into which the German States should come on equal terms with the other European States, so that Germans would have some guarantee that the preponderant military power of their rivals would not be used in attempts to destroy their nationality, or to place them in a position in which their commerce and industry would be carried on with a handicap and their work of national organisation checked and hampered by foreign influences and jealousies. If, on the other hand, military and political power is used, for instance, to reduce their armament while that of Russia, say, or of France is allowed to grow unchecked; if Germany is placed under the tutelage of a Power like Russia, which she regards as non-European and in part non-Christian; or of France, her historic enemy, such use of force will be resisted, and if history teaches any lessons at all, successfully resisted. If, indeed, the settlement is imposed on her from without, instead of being arranged with her co-operation and consent, it will not endure, and none of those results in the direction of a better, more stable and secure, less military and force-worshipping Europe, which were to flow from German defeat can for a moment be expected to result from it.

I want to suggest that this failure of our expectations is certain if we, like the Prussians before us, base our settlement upon sheer military might, disregarding their consent or desires or co-operation, in view of the well-demonstrated fact that the sheer military subservience in those conditions of a people like the Germans can only be temporary, because (a) of the recuperative capacity shown by such conquered States in the past, and (b) of the extreme mutability of alliance which gives the preponderance of power against them.

Impossibility of Suppressing German Nationalism.

The merely temporary effect upon a virile people of the destruction of their armies and political machinery, the artificial and unreal character of the apparent "wiping off the map" that follows, has been dramatically demonstrated in the case of Germany within the memory of the fathers of men still living. In the first few years of the nineteenth century Prussia was annihilated as a military force. The army was destroyed at Jéna and Auerstadt, and the whole country was overrun by the French. By the Peace of Tilsit, Prussia was deprived of all territory west of the Elbe and all her Polish provinces, of the southern part of West Prussia, of Dantzic, thus losing nearly half her population and area. A French Army remained in occupation until large contributions demanded by France were paid; and by the subsequent convention she was limited to an army of not more than 42,000 men and was forbidden to establish a militia. She was broken apparently so completely that even some five years later she was compelled to furnish at Napoleon's command a contingent for the invasion of Russia. The German States were kept apart by all the statecraft that Napoleon could employ. He played upon their mutual jealousies, brought some of them into alliance with himself, created a buffer State of Westphalia, Frenchified many of the German courts, endowed them with the Code Napoleon. Germany seemed so shattered that she was not even a "geographical expression." It seemed, indeed, as though the very soul of the people had been crushed, and that the moral resistance to the invader had been stamped out, because as one writer has said, it was the peculiar feature of the Germany which Napoleon overran that her greatest men were either indifferent, like Goethe, or else gave a certain welcome to the ideas which the French invaders represented. Yet with this unpromising material the workmen of the German national renaissance laboured to such good purpose that within a little more than five years of the humiliation of the Peace of Tilsit the last French Army in Germany had been destroyed, and it was thanks to the very condition imposed by Napoleon with the object of limiting her forces that Prussia was able finally to take the major part in the destruction of the Napoleonic and in the restoration of the German Empire.* It was the crushing of Prussia after Jéna that dates the revival of German national consciousness and the desire for German unity.

*By the conventions which followed the Peace of Tilsit, the Prussian army was limited to 42,000 men. Scharnhorst kept to the terms of this convention, and at no time was the army more than 42,000 men—but he saw to it that every few months they were a different 42,000, so that when Prussia's opportunity came after the failure of Napoleon's Russian campaign, she was able to call up something like a quarter of a million trained men, and became by her energy and power the most formidable of the Continental members of the alliance which broke Napoleon.

The Lesson of 1870.

Now take the case of France in 1871. The German armies drawn from States which within the memory of men then living had been mere appenages of Napoleon, which as a matter of fact had furnished some of the soldiers of his armies, had crushed the armies of Louis Napoleon. Not merely was France prostrate, her territory in the occupation of German soldiers, the French Empire overthrown and replaced by an unstable Republic, but frightful civil conflicts like the Commune had divided France against herself. So distraught, indeed, was she that Bismarck had almost to create a French Government with which to treat at all. What was at the time an immense indemnity had been imposed upon her, and it was generally believed that not for generations could she ever become a considerable military or political factor in Europe again. Her increase of population was feeble, tending to stagnation, her political institutions were unstable, she was torn by internal dissensions, and yet, as we know, within five years of the conclusion of peace France had already sufficiently recuperated to become a cause of anxiety to Bismarck, who believed that the work of "destruction" would have to be begun all over again. And if one goes back to earlier centuries, to the France of Louis XIV, her recovery after her defeat in the war of the Austrian Succession, to the incredible exhaustion of all Germany in wars like the Thirty Years' War when her population was cut in half, or of Prussia in the Seven Years' War, despite her military victory, it is the same story: a virile people cannot be "wiped from the map." Their ideals, good or bad, cannot be destroyed by armies.

There are, moreover, one or two additional factors to be kept in mind. The marvellous renaissance of France after 1871 has become a commonplace, and yet this France which is once more challenging her old enemy, is a France of stationary population, not having, because not needing, the technical industrial capacity which marks certain other peoples, like the Americans and the Germans. The German population is not stationary, it is increasing at the rate of very nearly a million a year, and if the result of this war is to attenuate something of the luxury and materialism which has marked modern Germany, that rate of population increase will not diminish but rather be accelerated, for it is the people of simple life that are the people of large families. It is altogether likely that the highly artificial Austrian Empire (itself the work of the sword, not of natural growth), embracing so many different races and nationalities, will be politically rearranged. The result of such rearrangement will be to give to German Austria an identity of aim and aspiration with the other German States, so that however the frontiers may be rectified and whatever shuffling may take place, this solid fact will remain—that there will be in central Europe one hundred millions

speaking German, and nursing, if their nationality is temporarily overpowered, the dream of reviving it when the opportunity shall occur.

Growing Rapidity of National Recovery.

And there is one more fact. As I have already hinted, the element which distinguishes one people from another, both in its good and bad qualities, are the things of the mind. Someone has asked: "What is it that makes the difference between the kind of society that existed in the State of Illinois five hundred years ago, and the kind of society that exists there to-day?" The Red Indian had the same soil and air and water, the same bodily vigour as—or greater than—that possessed by the modern American; all the raw materials of the complex civilisation were there as much five hundred years ago as now. The one thing which marks the difference between the modern American and the Red Indian is just the difference of knowledge and ideas, accumulated experience and the secret of the management of matter. Given that, given this knowledge of the manipulation of the raw materials of nature, and a completely new society is readily created. You may go into American cities of which fifteen years ago not one stone stood upon another, but which have all the machinery of civilisation—the factories, the railroads, the tram lines, telephones, telegraphs, newspapers, electric light, schools, warmed houses—that one can find in London or in Paris. It is merely accumulated knowledge which enables all these things to be created in a desert within a decade. Now that fact means this: that given this accumulated knowledge and this technical capacity, the recuperation of a people from the destruction of war will be much more rapid in our day than it has been in the past. And that technical capacity, that special knowledge, the Germans possess to a very high degree; they have indeed been called the Americans of Europe. And if we can imagine the machinery of civilisation destroyed, their factories pulled down and the railroads torn up (and these things will not happen in any very great degree), even so, within a very few years it would all be restored once more, and we should have to reckon with this fact of a hundred million Germans manufacturing, trading, teaching, organising, scheming as before.

I come to the other group of factors which I have enumerated above, showing the impossibility permanently of suppressing by sheer force of arms a national ambition, good or bad, and that is the mutability of the alliances by which alone it can be effected.

The Instability of Alliances.

In the Balkan War we had manifested two extraordinary political phenomena that are particularly suggestive in this connection. You had a group of separate States, not linked by any

public formal political bond, but thrown together by one common fear, resentment, or ambition: the desire to wrest members of their race from Turkish tyranny. When the Balkan League started upon the war against Turkey everyone prophesied that their jealousies and the difficulty of military co-operation would give the advantage to Turkey. Events falsified this prophecy. The Balkan League astonished the world by its successes against the very highly militarised power of Turkey. But immediately the war was over and the military successes achieved, dissensions arose among the Allies over the division of the spoils, and the first Balkan War was succeeded by a second Balkan War, in which the Allies fought against one another, and the final settlement was such as to satisfy none of the parties.*

Now at the bottom of all our system of alliances, notably those embodying the principle of the balance of power, is the assumption that the superior military force of one country can and will be used to its own advantage and to the disadvantage of weaker powers. This, it is urged, constitutes the need for a balance, an equilibrium, so that neither can challenge the other.

The Unstable "Balance of Power."

But it is obvious that the degree to which there is a belief in the advantages, moral or material, of conquest, the desire for the domination of someone else, there will always be a tendency for the individual member, when he sees a chance by the rearrangements of parties to exchange the politically unprogressive condition of equilibrium for the progressive and expanding condition of victory over others, to change his side. Or to put it differently, so long as we believe that there is advantage as well as safety (and we do believe it) in being stronger than others, there will always be an impulse so to rearrange the grouping that the obvious advantage of strength lies with us and against our rival, whether that rival be a group or a nation. Military power, in any case, is a thing very difficult to estimate: an apparently weaker group or nation has often proved, in fact, to be the stronger, so that there is a desire on the part of both sides to give the benefit of the doubt to themselves, and we come to believe that the way to secure peace is in Mr. Churchill's phrase: "To be so much stronger than your enemy that he will not dare to attack you." But the other side also thinks that, and each cannot be stronger than the other. Thus the natural and latent effort to be strongest is obviously fatal to any "balance." Neither side, in fact, desires a balance; each desires to have the balance tilted in its favour. This sets up a perpetual tendency towards rearrangement; and regroupings and reshufflings in these international alliances sometimes take place with extraordinary and startling rapidity, as in the case of the

* An eminent American who has recently travelled from one end of the Balkans to the other says that the prevailing remark of all is that "*rien n'est fini.*"

Balkan States. It is already illustrated in the present war: Italy has broken away from a definite and formal alliance that everyone supposed would range her on the German side. There is at least a possibility that she may finally come down upon the Anglo-Franco-Russian side. You have Japan, which little more than a decade ago was fighting bitterly against Russia, to-day ranged upon the side of Russia. The position of Russia is still more startling. In the struggles of the 18th and early 19th centuries Britain was always on the side of Russia; then for two generations we were taught that any increase of the power of Russia was a particularly dangerous menace. That once more was a decade ago suddenly changed, and we are now fighting to increase both relatively and absolutely the power of a country which our last war upon the Continent was fought to check. The war before that which Great Britain fought upon the Continent was fought in alliance with Germans against the power of France. As to the Austrians whom we are now fighting, they were for many years our faithful allies. So it is very nearly true to say of nearly all the combatants respectively that they have no enemy to-day that was not, historically speaking, quite recently an ally, and not an ally to-day that was not in the recent past an enemy.

These combinations, therefore, are not, never have been, and never can be, permanent. If history, even quite recent history, has any meaning at all, the next ten or fifteen or twenty years will be bound to see among these nine combatants now in the field, rearrangements and permutations out of which the crushed and suppressed Germany that is to follow the war—a Germany which will embrace, nevertheless, a hundred million of the same race, highly efficient, highly educated, trained for co-ordination and common action—will be bound sooner or later to find her chance.

Position Summarised.

Let us summarise the conclusions of some of the queries that we have put.

The annihilation of Germany is a meaningless phrase. You cannot annihilate 65 or a 100 million people. They will remain, the men who have built their homes and the men who have fought their battles will still be there. You cannot divide them up between France and Russia save at the cost of making those two States highly militarised, undemocratic, and oppressive Powers. If you broke up these hundred million into separate States there is no reason why, if a Balkan League could be formed and fight successfully, a German League could not do likewise. Those diplomatic combinations by which the German States of the future are to be kept in subjugation cannot be counted upon for permanence and stability—such combinations never have been and in their nature cannot be permanent or immutable.

For this reason Prussianism will never be destroyed by a mere military victory of one group over another. If the war is to begin and end with the defeat of the German armies and the subjugation of the German State, the result will be either to transfer Prussianism and all that it represents in the way of militarism from one capital to another or to others; or to create a situation in which the struggle for military domination on the part of the German people will break out afresh in another form; or else to achieve both these objects: to revive the military ambitions of France, to stimulate those of Russia, and so to recast those of Germany as to make them material for future explosions.

The expectation that you can cure Germans of Prussianism, that you can drive a false doctrine from their minds merely by overpowering their armies and invading their country is not only very false philosophy but, it happens curiously enough, to be characteristically Prussian philosophy; it is Prussianism pure and simple, and falls into the very fallacy which marks Prussianism so stupid and evil a thing.

Let me put the matter very definitely. I submit: (1) That because we are right when we say that Prussianism is a false doctrine, a mischievous fallacy, an evil state of mind and temper, we are wrong when we think that the military defeat of an army can destroy it, since to do so is to ask that a man shall abandon his belief because a stronger man has struck him or a larger army beaten his; it is to assume that beliefs depend not on the mind but on the operation of material things—the heavier artillery or better cavalry, of material force in fact. I submit also (2) that belief in false doctrine can only be corrected by a recognition of its fallacy; that the false doctrine of Prussianism—the belief in the value of military power, the desire for political domination—is not confined to northern Germany, but in greater or lesser degree infects all the great Powers of Europe. (3) That a better Europe therefore depends not only—perhaps not mainly—upon the military defeat of one particular nation, but upon a general recognition that the struggle for political power which all nations have pursued when opportunity offered is a barren and evil thing; that when achieved it adds neither to the moral nor material welfare of those that achieved it, and that if ever Europe is to be truly civilised we must honestly and sincerely abandon this struggle and all the shoddy conceptions of pride and glory and patriotism with which it is bound up in favour of the co-operation of all for the security and welfare of all; that the society of nations must be based as all other civilised societies are based, upon the agreement of partners co-operating to a common end; that in the circumstances the lead in this new conception must be given by the victorious Allies; and finally that upon the sincerity and pertinacity with which it is followed by them, upon the genuineness of *their* disbelief in Prussianism will the nature of the future depend.

All these propositions have been supported of late in somewhat unexpected quarters. The *Times* says :

If it be true that "every man in the German Empire believes sincerely and honestly to-day that the war is one of self-defence against the hostile encroachments of Russia, France, and England," "every man" must be disillusioned. Not until the German people has been compelled to perceive this struggle in its true light can there be a prospect of lasting peace for the world.

Well that, of course, is exactly what I desire to urge : there will be no peace in Europe until the Germans are convinced that Russia, France, and Britain do not desire and do not intend to encroach upon their Fatherland. The question is : How shall we convince them of that? Some of us are saying, "By dismembering their Fatherland." Will that convince them that they are not threatened and do not need to revive their armaments?

There are many, of course, who urge that our main business is to convince them that they cannot encroach upon the countries of others ; that what they think beyond that does not matter much to their neighbours. Well, I submit, with the *Times*, that it is very important indeed what opinion Germans form as to the motives and objects of their enemies.

How to Increase German Militarism.

We have decided in Great Britain that the Prussian military party desired and plotted this war for the purpose of subduing France, challenging the power of Britain, and making Germany the dominant State of the world. That is possibly a true view, but it is not the explanation of the war which the military party have given to the German people. To the German people they represent this war as one of defence, and at the present moment the assumption cited by the *Times* is certainly true : sixty million Germans are absolutely persuaded that they are fighting this war in defence of their Fatherland, to save their nationality from destruction. It is not a question of whether they are right or wrong : that is undoubtedly what the overwhelming mass of Germans sincerely and honestly believe. The attitude of many to the military party has changed since the outbreak of the war. Before the war, when they were told by the Prussian military party that Germany needed far larger armaments, great sections in Germany did not believe that party. The Social Democrats, for instance, who number more than one third of the entire voters of the empire, strenuously opposed the agitation of the German Navy League and Army League, and accused the Prussian military party of exaggeration or deception when that party urged that the country was in danger from its neighbours. But now the anti-militarist party in Germany, when they see their country or their colonies about to be invaded by five enemy nations, are wondering whether, after all, the Prussians were not right in asking for larger armaments. If Germany is beaten the Prussians will be able to

say: "If you had given us all that we asked for we should not have been beaten." Thus there are very many millions of Germans who, distrusting and detesting the Prussians before the war, are now disposed to say: "Perhaps, after all, the Prussians are right to be prepared and to have this big and efficient military machine." Do you suppose Germans will be less disposed to say that if Germany is broken up, and its territory, or any considerable portion of it, passes under alien government?

It is one of the outstanding characteristics of Prussian stupidity to assume that other people will be affected by motives which would never influence the conduct of a Prussian. The senseless philosophy of his warfare is based on the assumption that he can terrify the people of an invaded or conquered province out of the determination to defend their country, knowing perfectly well that if he, a Prussian, were defending Prussia, all the threats of harsh treatment would only make him more determined to resist the invader. And if you examine the mistakes in the diplomacy and government of Prussia, you will find that most of them are due to this absolute incapacity of the Prussian to put himself in the other man's shoes, to the general assumption that the Prussian is "different"; that it is ridiculous to suppose that other people whose country he is pleased to invade are like him and have an equal tenacity and determination not to yield to bullying and to force.

And yet when we assume that by "smashing" Germany we are going to discredit militarism or induce the German to abandon his effort to remain a great military power, are we adopting any other than the Prussian way of reasoning? Let me put a definite case.

We have in this country a considerable number of people who for fifteen years have been urging that a much larger army than we have heretofore possessed was necessary for our defence, and that if we could not get it otherwise we ought to resort to compulsion. Now the views of those military advocates have not been adopted. But suppose we were beaten in this war, that our country were overrun by Germans and Austrians, that our Empire were broken up. Would the effect of that be to make national service less or more likely? Would a German invasion cause us to reduce our armaments in other respects and to render us less anxious to be strong in the future? You know, of course, that it would have the exactly contrary effect. Why do you expect, therefore, that if the circumstances were reversed, Germany would act differently?

Even though Germans succeeded somehow in preventing our raising an army, would that in any way alter our conviction that to raise an army is what we ought to do if we could? And if our Empire were broken up and our colonies passed under German rule, does any Briton really think all the five nations of our British Empire would sit down and accept that as the last word,

that we should not plot and scheme and dream and contrive and teach the old ideals to our children and make them love the old memories and pray every day for their revival; and should we ever abandon hope that that revival and renaissance would take place?

Again, why, therefore, should we expect that other people should act differently?

Indeed the case is stronger than I have put it. Suppose that this British Empire, broken up in the twentieth century, had only a hundred years before been broken up utterly and yet had pieced itself together again, stronger and mightier than ever. Would there be a Briton alive who would not know that sooner or later his chance would come and that he would re-establish this Empire again, as his fathers did before him?

German Aggression Must be Defeated.

Need we necessarily conclude, therefore, that the complete defeat of Germany in this war is unnecessary or undesirable? Not the least in the world. It is probably now true that there can be no permanent peace in Europe until Germany is defeated, but what I have urged throughout this pamphlet is that defeat alone will not give us permanent peace, and that only by bold and constructive work along the lines I have indicated, involving the abandonment of false political doctrine by ourselves as well as by our enemy, can we avoid this becoming the seed of future wars.

And that conclusion is not in the least invalidated—indeed it is strengthened—even if we take the view that this war arises out of an attempt on the part of Germany to impose her rule upon Europe. We are told that Germany is fighting this war for the mastery of Europe as against the Slav: it is a struggle as to whether Slav or Teuton shall dominate the world. Whether the culprit in this case be German or Russian, there is only one thing which can permanently end it, and that is for both alike to realise that this thing for which they struggle is a futile, empty, and evil thing even when attained. If Germany could conquer all Europe not a single one of the millions of men and women who make up Germany would be one whit the better morally or materially; they would in all human probability be morally and materially the worse. The men and women of the great States—of the Austrias, the Russias, and the Germanies—do not lead happier or better lives by reason of such “greatness” than do the Swiss or Dutch or Scandinavians. This political power, bought at such infinite price, does not add any mortal thing, moral or material, of value to the lives of those who purchase it so dearly.

We Must Destroy the Doctrine of Prussianism.

It is the illusion as to the value of this thing for which the nations struggle that we must dispel. So long as we nurse the worship of this idea of political “greatness”—and such a worship is not a German any more than it is a French or British idea, it

is European—we must expect the worship to take the form of these ignoble wars. It is this worship, of which we are all guilty, which is the true Prussianism and which must be destroyed.

That result cannot be achieved by any purely mechanical means. It involves what all human progress involves—a correction of idea. It must be approached through the mind. We must realise that certain beliefs that we have held in the past are unsound, and we must be prepared in order to vindicate the better creed to take if need be certain risks, less risk than that involved in the European armed camp of the past, infinitely less, but still, some risk. We have seen that the plan of the rivalry of armaments, the plan of each being more prepared for war, of being stronger than anyone else, has miserably failed. A plan based on universal distrust cannot give a decent human society. We shall have to try more honestly and more sincerely and with more persistence than we have tried before to agree together for our common good, and instead of having one group facing another group, three nations facing three nations and acting in rivalry, it must be six acting in common for our common good.

In the last resort human society does not and cannot rest upon force. When at an election the Conservatives vote the Liberals out of power, what assurance have they that the Liberals will surrender that power? You say the army? But it is the existing Liberal Government that commands the army, that holds all the instruments of power. There is no assurance that the Liberals will just step down and surrender the instruments of power to their rivals, save the agreement, the convention, and if that agreement were not abided by, the Conservatives would raise an army of rebellion and turn the Liberals out, just as in certain South American republics. And they, of course, would hold power until the Liberals had raised an army, and so you would have the sort of thing that prevails in Venezuela and the other countries where revolutions succeed one another every six months. And it is not the existence of our armies which prevent that, because countries like Venezuela have more soldiers in proportion to the number of the population than any others. The only thing which prevents it is the general faith that each reposes in the other playing the game. A similar convention must be extended to the international field, and until we get a general recognition of the need for action by that method between nations, Prussianism will never die. The only hope for its defeat resides in the triumph of a truer and better political doctrine, the realisation that struggle for military ascendancy must be abandoned not by one party alone, but by all alike; that international anarchism, the belief that there is no society of nations, must be abandoned for a frank recognition of the obvious fact that the nations do form a society, and that those principles which all recognise as the sole hope of the maintenance of civilisation within the nations must also be applied as the only hope for the maintenance of civilised intercourse between nations.

There has just lately been given impressive evidence that even orthodox diplomatists, when the brink of tragedy reveals the realities beneath the superficialities of conventional statecraft, recognise the need for this new spirit and bolder method.

It will be remembered that in the years preceding the war British diplomacy had given its adherence to the principle of the "Balance of Power"—of throwing its weight with one group as against another group which was presumed to be hostile to it; if such a system was designed to keep the peace it has obviously and pathetically failed; the preceding pages give a hint of why, by virtue of its very nature, such a policy must fail. When in the tragic days at the end of July its failure became evident, Sir Edward Grey at the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute made a desperate and despairing effort hurriedly to formulate a policy which should be based on the opposite principle of the Concert, or European League. In a dispatch he says :

If the peace of Europe can be preserved, and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it, as far as I could, through the last Balkan crisis, and, Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis, so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations, be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto*

But it is not at the last stroke of the clock, at the edge of the precipice, when all the disastrous forces of conflict have already gained a terrible momentum, that they can be stopped, and a new and revolutionary policy framed to cope with them. After the war is over peace must be so arranged that it will be possible to revive that plan and pursue it sincerely, resolutely, and patiently. Meanwhile, and as a last word, it is necessary to point out that though it is essential to realise that the mere military victory of the Allies will not solve the old troubles, that victory is none the less necessary for their solution, and nothing that I have written here is in the slightest degree in conflict with insistence upon that great need. While we cannot destroy the doctrine of Prussianism with arms, neither can we destroy it if Prussian arms are victorious.

Not Conquest, But Partnership.

Let me try to make the position quite clear by a simple historical analogy. The ideals of the Catholic Church were at one period of the history of Europe "protected" and promoted by military force. That is to say, Catholic groups or states attempted to smash Protestant groups or states in the interests of Catholicism,

* Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen July 30, 1914. White Paper No. 101 (p. 55).

and to some extent at least the converse was true of Protestant groups or states. Either attempt was rightly resisted by the other party. The evil was not in either ideal, the evil was in the attempt to impose that ideal by force upon others—a proposition to which any Catholic or Protestant to-day will thoroughly agree. A good Catholic would to-day be as ready to die for his faith on the battlefield as were his forebears. But there are many good Catholics who would fight on the side of Protestants if we could imagine a Catholic group attempting to impose Catholicism by force. When Protestants were attacked in the 16th century they very rightly defended themselves, but when after victory they made the mistake of attempting to smash Catholicism by the very same means which the Catholics had been using against them, they did nothing but perpetuate the wars of religion. Those wars ceased not by one party finally overcoming and crushing the other, and making Europe completely Protestant or completely Catholic, but they came to an end when both parties agreed not to attempt to enforce their faith by the power of the sword. It was not the Catholic faith which created the wars of religion, it was the belief in the right to impose one's faith by force upon others. So in our day, it is not the German national faith, the *Deushtum*, the belief that the German national ideal is best for the German—it is not that belief that is a danger to Europe. It is the belief that that German national ideal is the best for all other people, and that the Germans have a right to impose it by the force of their armies. It is that belief alone which can be destroyed by armies. We must show that we do not intend to be brought under German rule or have German ideals imposed upon us, and having demonstrated that, the Allies must show that they in their turn have no intention of imposing their ideals or their rule or their dominance upon German peoples. The Allies must show after this war that they do not desire to be the masters of the German peoples or States, but their partners and associates in a Europe which none shall dominate but which all shall share.

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